2/4/88

FBI Director William Sessions Replies

I am writing to express my deep concern about the editorial "A Disgrace to the FBI" [Jan. 26] and the Herblock cartoon that depicts FBI agents in Ku Klux Klan garb [Jan. 28]. I am troubled that some of the media have taken the allegations of discrimination and harassment and depicted them as wholesale, deep-rooted racism within the entire FBI.

These allegations are extremely serious. I have personally instructed that the FBI's investigation of this matter receive priority attention. Because of the pending civil litigation and the ongoing criminal investigation, I cannot properly comment further about the allegations. I can say, however, that administrative disciplinary action will be taken if our standards of conduct or other regulations have been violated. The FBI will assist in any prosecution of individuals found to have participated in criminal activity. Conversely, if the allegations are not substantiated, the individuals against whom they were made should be vindicated by the investigation and/or the courts.

There is, as was so aptly stated in the editorial, no room for racism in the federal work force. I can state unequivocally that racism of any type will not be tolerated in the FBI.

It is the FBI's responsibility to enforce criminal civil rights statutes, and we will continue to do so aggressively and impartially. Our record is good; among those convicted of civil rights violations have been members of the Ku Klux Klan. To depict an FBI agent dressed in a Klan robe seems to me to be unfair and inconsistent with the facts. Because it is our responsibility to investigate these allegations, it is absolutely essential that we not have discriminatory conduct within the FBI. It is contrary to the law and to the spirit of the Constitution.

Since becoming the FBI's director a few months ago, I have seen no indication of systemic discrimination in the FBI. The FBI has made great strides in the recruitment and advancement of minorities. The number of black special agents has more than doubled in the past decade, and more than 40 percent of our black special agents are in the management program. Recruitment and advancement of minorities remain as priorities. It is my sincere hope that the recent press accounts will in no way impede our ongoing efforts in this regard.

WILLIAM S. SESSIONS
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington

'Super Bore'

Colman McCarthy's piece on the Super Bowl [op-ed, Jan. 30] was something I never thought anyone would have the courage to write. It was great! I completely agree with him.

I disagreed with Mr. McCarthy when he wrote a column last fall favoring the banishment of dogs, but now we are on the same team. The Super Bowl is indeed a "Super Bore" for many people.

MYRNA M. OLIVER
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